United Nations A/51/PV.89

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

89th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 18 December 1996, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 5.35 p.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: This evening, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 117, 118, 119, 120, 124, 129, 137, 139, 141, 157, 121, 122, 140, 114, 112 and 116.

I invite the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Goumenny (Ukraine), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour today to present to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on the agenda items allocated to it. Members will recall that 37 agenda items were allocated to the Fifth Committee at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

From 23 September to 18 December the Fifth Committee held 47 plenary meetings. Negotiations were carried out through numerous informal consultations. The following is a brief report on the result of the work of the Fifth Committee:

With regard to agenda item 117, "Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency," the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/692, in paragraph 5 of which the Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the statistical report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the budgetary and financial situation of organizations of the United Nations system and the report of the Secretary-General on accounting standards. That oral decision was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 118, "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/742, and in paragraph 7 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 119, "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/747. In paragraphs 11 and 12 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution and draft decision, which were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In relation to agenda item 120, "Human resources management", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/643/Add.1, and in paragraph 8 of that report the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions, which were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 124, "Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission", the report

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of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/740. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 129, "Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/639/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 137, "Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/743. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 139, entitled "Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/744. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 141, "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/741. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 157, "Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/638/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft decision, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 121, "United Nations common system", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/745. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 140, "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/753. In paragraph 7 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 114, "Programme planning", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/748. In the relevant paragraph of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 112, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", the reports of the Fifth Committee are contained in documents A/51/751 and A/51/752. In the relevant paragraph of the report contained in document A/51/751, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution, regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the outline for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999; and in the relevant paragraph of the report contained in document A/51/752, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of two draft decisions, which concern, respectively, the biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee and the action taken on certain agenda items and relevant reports of the Committee. The draft resolution and the two draft decisions were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

With regard to agenda item 116, "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/750. Under this agenda item, the Committee adopted two draft resolutions: one concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/214 and 50/215; and one regarding the report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. In the relevant paragraph of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the two draft resolutions, which were adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to our very able Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Joseph Acakpo-Satchivi, for his dedicated assistance to the smooth functioning of the work of our Committee. I should like also to thank the Controller, Mr. Takasu; the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), Ambassador Mselle; the Budget Director, Mr. Halbwachs; and all their staff for the full support they have given the Committee in order to facilitate its work.

With regard to the report on agenda item 122, "United Nations pension system", the Fifth Committee has just voted on this item and the report is not yet ready.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401 the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in a plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee".

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall take decisions in the same manner as in the Fifth Committee. This means that where recorded or separate votes were taken, we will do the same.

I would also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fifth Committee.

Agenda item 117

Administrative and budgetary coordination of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/692)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 5 of its report.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 117?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 118

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/742)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/211 A, B, C, D and E).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 118.

Agenda item 119 *(continued)*

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/747)

The President: The Assembly will now take decisions on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 11 of its report and the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 12 of the same report.

We turn first to the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/212).

The President: We turn next to the draft decision entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", which the Fifth Committee adopted without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 119.

Agenda item 120 *(continued)*

Human resources management

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/643/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly has before it two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Amendments to the Staff Rules".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft decision I was adopted.

The President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Human resources management".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft decision II was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 120.

Agenda item 124

Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/740)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution A/51/213).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 129 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/639/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of Part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 129.

Agenda item 137

Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/743)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution A/51/214).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 137.

Agenda item 139

Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/744)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/215).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 139.

Agenda item 141

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/741)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 141.

Agenda item 157 *(continued)*

Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/638/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 157.

Agenda item 121

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/745)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 ot its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission".

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution A/51/216).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 121.

The meeting was suspended at 6.10 p.m. and resumed at 10.35 p.m.

Agenda item 122

United Nations pension system

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/746)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 18 of its report. The draft resolution is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.36.

I call on the representative of Ukraine, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of the vote before the voting.

Mr. Bogayevskiy (Ukraine): I will be very brief at this late hour, when all delegations have waited so long for the final stage of this session of the General Assembly.

We had several opportunities to explain our position on agenda item 122, especially on section IV of the draft resolution contained in A/C.5/51/L.36. We still hold that position, and we will stick to it because we continue to believe that this very sensitiveissue for a number of my countrymen has not been dealt with adequately.

As I said in the Fifth Committee, the settlement of this issue was off course from the very beginning. The issue is extremely difficult and concerns the interests of a group of countries. However, in this particular case, the decision took the course that would suit the interests of only one country. We cannot accept that.

I do not see any further reason to explain our position because it was explained in detail in our statement on 4 December. I would therefore ask at this stage for a separate vote on section IV. This means that we would like to see it not included in the package of A/C.5/51/L.36 because, unfortunately, this controversial section IV in this very important package contained in document A/C.5/51/L.36 spoils everything. For that reason I would like to state that, although we support the other parts of document A/C.5/51/L.36, we do not support section IV. Because of our non-acceptance of section IV we will have to vote accordingly on the draft resolution as a whole.

I therefore ask for two separate votes.

The President: A separate vote has been requested on section IV of the draft resolution which, for the time being, is contained in document A/C.5/51/L.36.

If I see no objection to that request, I shall first put to the vote section IV of the draft resolution, on which a separate vote has been requested.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Morocco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, United States of America, Zambia

Against:

Ukraine

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zimbabwe

Section IV was adopted by 36 votes to 1, with 62 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Ukraine

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Fiji, Ghana, Liberia, Lithuania, Mexico, Paraguay, Republic of Moldova, Uruguay

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by 102 votes to 1, with 12 abstentions (resolution 51/217).

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Algeria informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Ecuador and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had intended to abstain.]

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 122.

Agenda item 140

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/753)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The draft resolution is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.34.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolutions 51/218 A, B, C and D).

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 114

Programme planning

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/748)

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The text of the draft resolution is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.37.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/219).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Gelber (United States of America): The United States wishes to explain its position in reference to priority (b) of the medium-term plan and the budget outline, which calls for

> "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences" (*A/51/748, p. 3*).

The clearest and most important of these references is contained in paragraph 6 of the Copenhagen Declaration:

> "We are deeply convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Equitable social development that recognizes empowering the poor to utilize environmental resources sustainably is a necessary foundation for sustainable development. We also recognize that broad-based and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is necessary to sustain social development and social justice." (*A/CONF.166/9, annex I, para. 6*)

It is our understanding that priority (b), as set forth above, means sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development.

Since the beginning of the decade, the international community has come together at a series of global Conferences that have defined an evolving consensus of our common principles. The United States believes that this consensus is one of the most remarkable and important developments of the post-cold-war world. It calls for sustainability: for economic development, social development and environmental protection. We are committed to fostering and defending these accords.

The reckless pursuit of economic growth at all costs has proved to be disastrous in all regions of the world. From the plundering of the oceans, the common heritage of mankind, by unsustainable fishing to the destruction of forests, the poisoning of air and water in disregard for environmental sustainability; the destruction of communities, marginalization of whole segments of societies and eventually, civil unrest attributable to social unsustainability; the world has seen the importance of pursuing sustainable development, whether in developed or developing countries or the economies in transition.

Sustainability is critical for all of our countries and must be incorporated into all of our development policies. For example, in some countries uncontrolled increases in exhaust have raised blood lead levels in children to the point where the development of the next generation is threatened. In Central Asia an entire sea has disappeared, poisoning the surrounding land. The examples go on and on. They brought us together at Rio in 1992, and we must ensure that the consensus we initiated is preserved. The United States, in cooperation with all our partners, intends to do so.

I should like this statement to be included in the record.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): The European Union is pleased to have joined consensus on A/C.5/51/L.37, by which the General Assembly has adopted the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

In joining consensus on this resolution, the European Union wishes to state that with reference to the priority for the Organization stated in paragraph 2 (b) of the Annex to the resolution, the European Union does not accept that the priority now adopted affects the international consensus reached on the concept of sustainable development as a primary objective of international cooperation for development. Therefore, this formulation cannot be considered to prejudge in any way ongoing discussions on the elaboration of "An Agenda for Development" and a special session for the review of Agenda 21.

With reference to paragraph 4 of part II of A/C.5/51/L.37, the European Union wishes to state that it does not accept in any way that the approval of the General Assembly is required for the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to restructure the Centre for Human Rights, which, in our estimation, falls entirely within its own competence.

Mr. Halsen (Canada): My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statements just made by the representatives of the United States and of Ireland, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Ms. Goicochea (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Cuban delegation fully supports the priority on sustained growth and economic development. We think that this should be one of the priorities kept in mind in ongoing negotiations on economic matters. The Cuban delegation also believes that the text that refers to the restructuring of the Centre of Human Rights means that the General Assembly is to take action in due course on the restructuring process of the Centre.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 114.

Agenda item 112

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Reports of the Fifth Committee (A/51/751 and A/51/752)

The President: The Assembly will turn first to the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/51/751.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report. The text of the draft resolution is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.40.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution entitled "Proposed Programme budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999" without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/220).

The President: The Assembly will now turn to the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/51/752.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the two draft decisions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report. The text of draft decision I is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.28.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision I, entitled "Action taken on certain items", without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: The text of draft decision II is contained, for the time being, in document A/C.5/51/L.29.

The Fifth Committee adopted draft decision II, entitled "Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 1997-1998", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

Mrs. Incera (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak in explanation of the position of the Group of 77 and China on the resolution that we have just adopted.

The Group of 77 and China joined in consensus on this resolution, despite the fact that we believe that the General Assembly should approve preliminary estimates of resources at the same level as the allocations for 1996-1997: $2.608 billion. The Group of 77 and China considers it fundamental that our decisions on the outline be fully in line with resolution 41/213 and, consequently, we believe that the Secretary-General, in submitting his draft programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, should not include budgetary provisions for non-mandated activities.

The Group of 77 and China hopes that activities that have been suspended or cancelled for the next biennium will be fully reflected in the budgetary request put forward by the Secretary-General for the following biennium.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): The European Union is pleased to have joined consensus on resolution 51/220, by which the General Assembly has approved the proposed budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999. The European Union regrets that it has not been possible to include as part of the budget outline the contingency provision for special missions proposed by the Secretary-General in document A/51/289. We have already expressed our general support for this contingency provision, subject to consideration of the technicalities, which we believe corresponds to a very real need to make provision for such missions in the context of the programme budget, in order to provide for their assured funding.

We believe that the Secretary-General's proposal represents a potentially useful innovation in the context of current budgetary procedures, and one that is not incompatible with those procedures. We are still strongly of the view that it would be appropriate to include contingency provision for such missions in the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, which the General Assembly will be required to adopt before the end of next year. In this regard, we look forward to the comprehensive policy paper on this matter that the Secretary-General has been requested to submit to the General Assembly under the provisions of paragraph 10 of resolution 51/220, and to consideration of this report taking place in conjunction with the proposed 1998-1999 programme budget.

In adopting resolution A/51/220, the General Assembly has approved a budget outline that requests the Secretary-General to prepare his programme budget on the basis of a total preliminary estimate of resources of $2.512 billion at initial 1996-1997 rates. This is a preliminary estimate of resources that is superior to the level of resources requested by the Secretary-General, particularly when account is taken of the fact that the General Assembly was not able at the current session to agree on including the contingency provision for special missions, put forward by the Secretary-General in his outline proposal.

In our view, the preliminary estimate of resources now approved has provided the Secretary-General with the potential to absorb costs, up to the level of $70 million, relating to new and unforeseen mandates in the area of international peace and security, which, it was intended, should be covered by the proposed contingency provision. In terms of additional costs arising beyond that, the provisions of resolution 41/213 clearly apply. We expect the Secretary-General to take due account of this additional unrequested capacity when framing his programme budget, and to propose an allocation of resources that would not prejudice a positive decision by the General Assembly on the basis of the Secretary-General's comprehensive policy paper that such contingency provision for special missions should be included in the 1998-1999 programme budget.

The European Union also wishes to recall the explanation of position it made in connection with agenda item 114 regarding the priorities set by the General Assembly for the period of the next medium-term plan, and particularly that priority relating to the promotion of sustainable development.

Mr. Jaremczuk (Poland): My delegation wishes to align itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Ireland on this point.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 116

Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/750)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on two draft resolutions recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 2 of its report, which, for the time being, are contained in paragraph 23 of section IV of document A/C.5/51/L.32.

Draft resolution I (A and B) is entitled "Questions related to the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997".

The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution I. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/221 A and B).

The President: The Fifth Committee adopted draft resolution II (A to C), entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/222 A, B and C).

The President: I now call on the representative of Costa Rica, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position.

Mrs. Incera (Costa Rica): (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to present the position of the Group of 77 and China on resolution 51/221 B, which the Assembly has just adopted. In our opinion, it is fundamental that the Secretariat, in carrying out the savings measures set forth in General Assembly resolution 50/214, follow the policy guidelines contained in operative paragraphs 9 and 10 of part B and effect the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities.

The Group of 77 and China is pleased that the resolution notes the assurances of the Secretary-General that he will not take any decision on the involuntary separation of staff members, including those on the redeployment list as a result of the aforementioned savings measures. In that connection, the Group of 77 and China look forward to receiving the information requested in operative paragraph 14. We hope that, pursuant to the provisions of operative paragraph 15, the Secretary-General will propose the restoration of a group of vacant posts as a result of the implementation of resolution 50/214. We view this as fundamental, given the activities that have been deferred or cancelled during the current biennium.

We attach particular importance to operative paragraphs 17, 18, 19 and 20, which, *inter alia*, request the Secretary-General to incorporate the efficiency reviews under way in programme and budget reviews. We consider this essential in order to avoid the duplication of structures that we have experienced. Those operative paragraphs are also aimed at avoiding the institutionalization recently established for the sake of efficiency structures. The Group of 77 and China hopes that the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts will undertake and carry out administrative reform while ensuring appropriate programme effectiveness and implementation, in keeping with their respective mandates.

The Group of 77 and China also attaches the highest priority to the report on the impact of savings measures on the Organization's programmes and activities, as requested in operative paragraph 20 of the resolution. Such an analysis should enable the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, requests for the resources needed to ensure full implementation of the activities and mandates approved by the General Assembly.

The President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 116.

The General Assembly has thus concluded consideration of all the reports of the Fifth Committee before it.

Programme of work

The President: Apart from organizational matters and items that may have to be considered by operation of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, and bearing in mind the action already taken by the Assembly at its 32nd, 33rd, 38th, 50th, 72nd to 74th, 82nd, 83rd and 85th to 89th plenary meetings concerning agenda items 10, 12, 17 (b), 19, 21 (b), 33, 35, 37, 39, 40, 56, 96 (b), 110 (d) 112, 114, 116, 118 to 126, 129, 133 to 135, 137, 139 to 141, 144, 153 to 155 and 157, I should like to propose that the following agenda items remain for consideration during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly:

Item 10	Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization
Item 12	Report of the Economic and Social Council
Item 17 (b)	Election of twenty members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination
Item 18 (h)	Appointment of members of the Joint Inspection Unit
Item 18 (i)	Confirmation of the appointment of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme
Item 19	Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
Item 21 (b)	Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions
Item 33	The situation in the Middle East
Item 35	Question of Palestine
Item 37	The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Item 39	The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security
Item 40	The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development
Item 43	The situation in Burundi
Item 46	Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
Item 47	Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters
Item 48	Strengthening of the United Nations system
Item 56	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Item 58	Question of Cyprus
Item 96 (b)	Agenda for development
Item 110 (d)	Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
Item 111	Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors
Item 112	Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations
Item 114	Programme planning
Item 115	Improving the financial situation of the United Nations
Item 116	Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997
Item 118	Pattern of conferences
Item 119	Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
Item 120	Human resources management
Item 121	United Nations common system
Item 122	United Nations pension system
Item 123	Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East
Item 124	Financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission
Item 125	Financing of the activities arising from Security Council resolution 687 (1991)
Item 126	Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
Item 128	Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
Item 129	Financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters
Item 130	Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II
Item 131	Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique
Item 132	Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
Item 133	Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
Item 134	Financing of the United Nations Mission in Haiti
Item 135	Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
Item 136	Financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
Item 137	Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible

for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Item 138 Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Item 139 Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Item 140 Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Item 141 Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Item 144 Convention on the law of the non-navigational uses of international watercourses

Item 153 Financing of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Item 154 Financing of the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium

Item 155 Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Item 157 Financing of the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly that those agenda items should remain for consideration during the fifty-first session of the Assembly?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The President: We should take great satisfaction in the outcome of our collective efforts, which began nearly three months ago, on 17 September 1996. With a determined sense of common purpose and direction, we have achieved many of the objectives of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

We successfully concluded, even if it was right down to the wire, the consideration of agenda item 16, "Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations," by appointing Mr. Kofi Annan as the new Secretary-General of the Organization beginning 1 January 1997. Given its significance, that item was a key issue which riveted global attention on the United Nations at this session. Nevertheless, there have been other equally important resolutions that contribute substantially to international peace and security and development, though not commanding much media attention.

In the last three months we have made significant strides to enhance efficiency, increase productivity and reduce wasteful practices. We have done this by practising effective time management. Thanks to the Fifth Committee, we have concluded our work a day behind our self-imposed schedule of 17 December 1996. As all members are aware, we tried to meet the target, but the Fifth Committee could not complete its work on 17 December. However, some of the other perennially late Committees, including the Second and Third Committees, concluded theirs on time.

During the fiftieth session the plenary of the Assembly and the Main Committees held a cumulative number of 353 meetings. Unused scheduled meeting time totalled 260 hours. During this session, up to 15 December 1996, the same bodies held a cumulative number of 327 meetings. Unused scheduled meeting time totalled 153 hours. We also managed to accomplish our overall work this session by holding 26 fewer meetings than last session.

By starting our meetings on time and by improving our work methods, we managed to use the allocated conference services resources better, so that the scheduled meeting time unused this session was 107 hours less than last session. One hundred seven hours translates into 36 three-hour meetings.

I do not want to bore you with statistics, but I would like to inform you of the notional savings for the Organization in terms of plenary meetings, by holding

fewer meetings and having less scheduled meeting time unutilized. This session, we held 89 meetings, in comparison to 100 during the last session — 11 meetings fewer than last session. In terms of unutilized scheduled meetings, the number of hours for this session was 35, as compared to 65 for the last session. The notional savings from 21 meetings is $410,000. Since September, the notional savings for the Organization, for plenary meetings, thus amounts to $410,000. This figure is only for plenary meetings and excludes notional savings for Main Committees; nor does it include overall overtime and related costs of support services, which would run into the thousands.

If resolutions are another indication of our attempts to improve work methods, we made advances in our efforts to reduce resolutions as well, not by elimination but by clustering and biennalization. To date, the Assembly has adopted 265 resolutions at this session compared to 282 resolutions last year during the same period.

There were problems, including documentation. In the case of the Third Committee, one of the main obstacles was the late distribution of documentation, particularly that prepared by the Centre for Human Rights. Although this is not a new situation, the problem of documentation availability was a serious threat to the Committee's ability to proceed expeditiously, as it was willing to do. This question needs to be addressed by delegations at the next session of the Commission on Human Rights, as well as at other relevant meetings. Further, the holding of a resumed session of the Economic and Social Council during this session directly affected the work of the General Assembly and imposed additional constraints on some of the Main Committees. We also need to consider ways of ensuring that the Fifth Committee completes its work on schedule.

For the United Nations to remain at the centre of international relations, it must be perceived as a vibrant Organization, not only in terms of its management, but also in terms of the qualitative and timely leadership it brings to bear on the issues of our time, such as disarmament, development, protection of the environment and the role of civil society. Can we attest that the resolutions which we have adopted do in fact reflect the issues of our time? Each of you can make your own judgement, but let me share some of my own perceptions.

Disarmament was a salient issue, particularly, nuclear disarmament. The appeal for more intense activity in pursuit of nuclear disarmament is contained explicitly in two resolutions. The demand for the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to commence negotiations on a phased and time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament was pronounced this year in the light of the failed attempt by non-nuclear-weapon States to insert such language into the text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Aspects of the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons bolstered the argument of non-nuclear-weapon States that such weapons should be abolished. They repeatedly pointed to the view expressed by the Court that the commitment made by nuclear-weapon States under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to negotiate measures to nuclear disarmament should be reflected in results.

The topic of nuclear-weapon-free zones evoked greater interest this year, in part because of the successes achieved. Those successes were surely the inspiration behind the initiative taken by Brazil in calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

The call for States vigorously to pursue an effective, legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines received overwhelming support, as was expected.

The political controversy over the timing of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, set at this stage for 1999, continued in this session and remains closely linked to the desire of a large number of States to focus the special session on further measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Although there is wide support for the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament, the response of some nuclear-weapon States remains problematic.

In addition to matters relating to nuclear disarmament, a range of resolutions was adopted on conventional weapons and other issues that impact on international peace and security.

The debate on development issues culminated in many significant resolutions, such as resolution 51/164, entitled "Enhancing international cooperation towards a durable solution to the external debt problem of developing countries". Traditionally, this is one of the most difficult resolutions. This year, it was more focused, concentrating on recent initiatives such as the heavily indebted poor countries debt initiative of the Bretton

Woods institutions. The final outstanding issue involved the extent to which the Assembly should call for the flexible implementation and further elaboration of this initiative.

Another important resolution, resolution 51/167, concerned "International trade and development", an issue which remains vital to the economic well-being of States. The resolution endorsed the results of the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and emphasized the importance of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Singapore, in reviewing the results of the Uruguay Round and the need for balance in the handling of new issues. It affirms that environmental and social concerns should not be used for protectionist purposes. I believe that many delegations consider this consensus resolution to be some sort of breakthrough in the effort to achieve North-South partnership.

In projecting some sense of forward planning, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 51/174, entitled "Renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership". That resolution agreed to defer the holding of a high-level dialogue on the theme of the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. The date, modalities and focus will be decided by the President of the General Assembly through consultations. The Secretary-General has also been invited to submit recommendations.

The focus of future work on development issues will also be guided by resolutions on environment and sustainable development, particularly resolution 51/181, entitled "Special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21". That resolution decided on the date for the special session, 23 to 27 June 1997, the modalities for its preparation and the way to ensure participation by major groups in the special session. The resolution invited the President of the General Assembly to propose, in consultation with Member States, appropriate modalities for the effective involvement of major groups in the special session.

On social issues, a number of significant decisions were taken. Two of the most significant decisions adopted were the unanimous resolution on the rights of the child (resolution 51/77) and the omnibus resolution (resolution 51/64) on international action to combat drug abuse and illicit production and trafficking. The latter calls for a special session of the General Assembly to address the issue comprehensively.

On the issues concerning the advancement of women and the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, efforts were made to draft an omnibus resolution to include a number of draft resolutions that had been individually presented under the item. This effort succeeded partially, because it was not possible to integrate all of these individual draft resolutions.

Another important area of work involved the issue of human rights. Various resolutions, on matters including the right to development, as well as country-specific resolutions, were adopted. It may be timely to consider how the General Assembly can reduce polarization on such issues if we are collectively determined to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Other issues which deserve mention include the Middle East, Palestine and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Given the problems relating to the implementation of the Oslo and Madrid peace accords, the resolutions commanded greater support. The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East outlined developments in the work of the Agency over the year under review, particularly the highs and lows in the context of the unstable emotional climate in the region. The dismal financial plight of UNRWA was underscored, with an appeal for early voluntary contributions.

For the first time, following the consideration of the report of the Security Council, a resolution outlining some views on the report (resolution 51/193) was adopted by a significant majority.

Important resolutions were also adopted on various peacekeeping activities including an omnibus text, which had earlier been considered by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. It was decided that the Special Committee's membership should be enlarged, based on certain criteria.

In the area of international law, the adoption of resolution 51/210, on measures to eliminate international terrorism was an important achievement. The resolution, together with the annexed Declaration to Supplement the 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, identified a new set of measures for combatting terrorism and called upon States to undertake

those measures. Furthermore, the resolution recommended that the General Assembly establish an ad hoc committee to elaborate an international convention for the suppression of terrorist bombing and, subsequently, an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism, and thereafter to address means of further developing a comprehensive legal framework of conventions dealing with international terrorism.

Also important was resolutions 51/207, on the establishment of an international criminal court. The resolution sets out a programme of work for 1997 and 1998 with a view to convening a diplomatic conference in 1998 to adopt a convention establishing the court.

On matters of finance and management, important resolutions were adopted. Of utmost importance is the adoption of resolution 51/219, on the Medium-Term Plan for the period 1998-2001. The Medium-Term Plan constitutes the principal policy directive for the United Nations to address and respond to persistent problems as well as address emerging trends and challenges of the future in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Other resolutions adopted are the revised Programme Budget for the Biennium 1996-1997 (resolution 51/222) and the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1998-1999 (resolution 51/220). It is unfortunate, however, that the Fifth Committee was unable to complete its discussions on the United Nations scale of assessments; it will resume discussions on this item as a matter of priority when it resumes its work in March 1997. A comprehensive draft resolution by the Fifth Committee will provide guidelines for the Committee on Contributions to prepare a new scale of assessments for Member States for the period 1998-2000.

As universally observed, Members States must pay on time and in full. The total deficit of $2.3 billion for both the regular and peacekeeping budgets remains far too high for the financial health and viability of this Organization. Critical issues within the purview of the Fifth Committee remain to be resolved.

During this session, the General Assembly has commemorated many special days relating to global issues, and has marked the anniversaries of certain institutions and important events. During these events, I emphasized the persistence of poverty, marginalization and social injustice in all their guises, and underlined the need for better action on the part of the international community in defence of universal values. In my opinion, such commemorative occasions should be used not only to extol the achievements of the United Nations and other organizations, but to examine the application of and recommitment to the principles at the heart of these multilateral efforts. We must, with courage, blow the smokescreen of rhetoric away. Our collective energies should be used instead to chart an honest and appropriate course for the United Nations so that it is better able to meet expectations.

The fifty-first session of the General Assembly has successfully begun the process of reaching out to civil society, through various informal sessions held in the plenary Assembly and in the Second and Third Committees. This session accords high priority to the issue of participation by non-governmental organizations, and expects urgent, focused and result-oriented action on the question of such participation in all areas of work of the United Nations. This will be done by establishing a sub-group of the Open-ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations system.

As we look forward to 1997, a full calendar of meetings of the working groups of the General Assembly and other bodies, including the resumed session of the General Assembly and the Fifth Committee, and the special session, await us. Our major challenge is to translate into action the overwhelming will of Member States to make progress in the working groups that deal with reform restructuring and financial situation of the United Nations. The assertiveness of everything we have achieved in the General Assembly has been underlined by the relevance, efficacy and fulfilment of Charter responsibilities.

Before I conclude, I must thank all of you, representatives and members of the Secretariat, for your dedication and diligence, and most of all for putting up with me. I would especially like to thank the Ambassadors and all other members of delegations who took the lead in coordinating draft resolutions and for doing so within a limited time span. Finally, I would like to express on behalf of the entire Assembly, our immense appreciation to the staff of the General Assembly Affairs, the interpreters, translators, the press officers and the music makers for a job extremely well done. I have not intended to omit any one, but if I have, I extend my apologies. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

The meeting rose at 11.35 p.m.